

**IDENTIFYING CAREER PATH PLANNING CRITERIA: PAVING THE WAY
TO SUCCESS IN THE LYNNWOOD, WASHINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

By: Tod A. Gates, Assistant Chief
Lynnwood Fire Department
Lynnwood, Washington

An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the
Executive Fire Officer Program

December 2004

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

ABSTRACT

Career-path planning, an intentional process that lays out positions within the hierarchy of the organization and identifies time in rank, education and certification requirements for promotional consideration, is an essential component of the succession planning process. Fire officers are required to sit as equals at the table with other senior officials, and need the proper skill sets to do so. The problem was that the Lynnwood Fire Department (LFD) did not have career-planning processes in place that allowed members to identify a career path through all positions in the organization. The purpose of this action research was to identify the criteria for a career path plan for the LFD by answering the following questions:

- What is career-path planning?
- What, if any, are the models available for career-path planning?
- What, if any, are the criteria being used by fire departments within Washington State?
- What are the criteria for a career-path plan for the Lynnwood Fire Department?

Research procedures included literature review, and two surveys, one directed at fire agencies in the State of Washington and another to firefighters within the LFD. The study results showed that formal planning processes are not prevalent at the current time, but with positive momentum in that direction. In the LFD, there is interest in pursuing the process. The planning effort must be bipartisan, with labor and management input to ensure success. The author recommends identifying existing competencies, evaluation of individual skills and jointly developing a plan to coach, mentor, train and equip the leaders of the future. Fire departments may consider forming regional coalitions to leverage talent and opportunities and add program depth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT.....	2
ABSTRACT.....	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE.....	6
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
PROCEDURES.....	14
RESULTS.....	17
DISCUSSION.....	25
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	28
REFERENCES.....	30
APPENDIX A (Washington State Survey Cover).....	32
APPENDIX B (Washington State Survey).....	33
APPENDIX C (Washington State Participant List).....	34
APPENDIX D (Washington State Survey Results).....	36
APPENDIX E (Lynnwood Career Path Survey Cover).....	37
APPENDIX F (Lynnwood Career Path Survey).....	38
APPENDIX G (Lynnwood Career Path Survey Participant List).....	39
APPENDIX H (Lynnwood Career Path Survey Results).....	40
APPENDIX I (Lynnwood Career Path Criteria).....	41

INTRODUCTION

The modern fire service has been implementing measures to create and enhance its image as a profession for several years. From technological improvements that improve a firefighter's ability to accomplish tasks, to diversification of mission, to applying standards to personnel as they enter and promote through the ranks, a yearning to have an equal place at the table of other multi-million dollar professional enterprises has spurred a myriad of improvements. A proud tradition of fighting men and women, the fire service is slow to embrace change. This tenacity and selflessness of service has served well in an occupation that was traditionally viewed as blue-collar work, governed and led primarily by fire chiefs without formal college degrees. The new leadership has begun, rather now, embraced at a distance the notion that to be seen as professionals seated as equals by other department heads, internal city staffs and the business community with whom they frequently interact will require a higher level of professional credentials.

A profession is defined as "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation" (Merriam-Webster Online, 2004). Today's fire department is a full-service agency led by an increasing number of college-educated professional fire chiefs. These chief officers are product of a transition from being promoted through the ranks solely on experience and seniority as in the past, to a system requiring not only requisite experience and street smarts, but also formal credentialing and education. In the very near future this will be the norm. To provide a bridge it will be essential to embrace this positive change and prepare career paths and planning initiatives for fire personnel that map out a path for those who are interested

from probationary firefighter up to fire chief or anywhere in between. The problem is that the Lynwood Fire Department (LFD) does not have career-planning processes in place that allow members to identify a career path through all positions in the organization.

Career-path planning is an essential component of the succession planning process. Kelly Blackmon (2004) noted, “The future of the professional fire service is clearly calling for supervisory and administrative training to promote to the rank of officer.” (p. 14). It allows for personnel to acquire the required experience, training, education and credentialing to prepare them for positions attained through the promotional process. The purpose of this action research project is to identify the criteria for a career path plan for the Lynwood Fire Department by answering the following questions:

- What is career-path planning?
- What, if any, are the models available for career-path planning?
- What, if any, are the career-plan criteria being used by fire departments within Washington State?
- What are the potential criteria for a career-path plan for the Lynwood Fire Department?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Lynnwood, Washington is an urban/suburban city of 35,000 residents with an influx of population during the daylight hours that often brings over 100,000 people into this roughly 8 square mile area. With a mix of light industry, residential, a significant retail and commercial center and two major freeways in its immediate vicinity, the city presents a challenging public safety environment. LFD employs 53 full-time firefighters operating out of two fire stations, fire prevention, training, emergency medical services

and administration. The city sits near the geographic center of the county just 15 miles north of Seattle, and as such has a high call volume and utilizes regular automatic aid with the surrounding jurisdictions as apparatus traverse boundaries while providing fire and emergency services.

Growth within the city has been steady, however annexation has been relatively slow. The incorporated area is now extremely dense and expansion into the metropolitan urban growth area is inevitable, leading to the building of additional fire stations and more personnel. Promotions within the department have been relatively few and far between, and training and education for personnel to move up in rank has been informal and sporadic. The recent incorporation of a third-service EMS agency into the department, creating opportunities for promotion to the rank of Firefighter/Paramedic has already made an impact in broadening the promotional range. The LFD personnel are ready and willing, however they have not had the opportunity to garner the broad-based experiences needed to successfully promote to the senior ranks. Evidence of the need for a formal career-path planning process comes most recently from the outside hiring of the current and former Assistant Chief – Operations. The problem is that LFD does not have career-planning processes in place that allow members to identify a career path through all positions in the organization. Several of the officers; about half of the Lieutenants/Captains and two of the executive officers are due to retire in the next two to four years. TriData Corp. identified in their 2003 comprehensive study of the Lynnwood Fire Department that, “firefighters may have the necessary operational skills to become an officer, but lack the managerial training to effectively command personnel.” (July 2003, v). This lack of training is a focal point that future career planning initiatives must be designed to correct. In an

Internet article, Gary Johnson (2004) writes about the importance of career planning, saying, "Succession planning ensures that an organization has the right personnel to function at peak capacity."

The purpose for this action research project is to identify the criteria for a career path plan for the LFD in order to ensure that the challenges of the future are ready to be met by well-trained, well-educated personnel who are prepared to lead. It is anticipated that a formal career path planning process will be developed following the project that will position the LFD to bring together the needs of the organization to fill positions with qualified candidates, and the desires of firefighters to have a clear path that outlines expectations, requirements and resources to prepare them for advancement.

The capstone course of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program is Executive Leadership. This course prepares the EFO to take the learning initiatives of the entire program and translate them into action plans for both personal and organizational growth. The study of career path planning directly relates to Unit 6: Succession/replacement planning, and specifically to the terminal objective, "develop an appreciation for workforce planning, development, and succession planning." (NFA Student Manual SM1, 2004, p. 6-2) In addition, the United States Fire Administration has established operational objectives, and this research directly relates to the goal of reducing loss of life by fire by preparing personnel through each step of their career to perform at the highest level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career-path planning

The fire service rank structure is fairly consistent across the country, with probationary firefighters on one end of the spectrum, and chiefs of the department on

the other. Historically, promotions in career and combination fire agencies were made based on experience and seniority, with test scores as the primary differentiating factor. Additionally, firefighters came into the service at a young age with little more required than a high school diploma.

Times have changed, and the fire service with them. Drs. Grant and Hoover (1994) identify this, saying, “another change in the fire service is the fact that some new members choose the fire service as a career whereas in the past most were “called to serve.” (p. 7). At the end of the probationary period, career path planning begins whether formally or informally. With the rank structure and job descriptions relatively unchanging, the firefighter may choose to begin a course of study for particular positions within the department or elect to concentrate on specialty areas at the firefighter level. This is a natural, almost self-selection process as further identified by Grant and Hoover (1994) go on to say that, “moderately specialized career paths are the mainstay of the fire service. Many personnel prefer one type of job function or activity over another.” (p. 33)

This change from a calling to a career choice is reflective of societal shift in focus from single career choices to a relatively common multiple-career, multiple-employer mentality. Fire agencies have reacted to these changes and others by requiring higher education and certification as a prerequisite to either hiring or promotional decisions. Competing incoming candidates are often older, perhaps changing careers or making lateral moves between fire departments. Credentials and education are becoming key factors in awarding promotions as the recognition of the need to be viewed as professionals by both the public and other allied agencies. This requires an intentionality by the firefighter or officer to become adequately prepared as noted by

Kelly Blackmon (2002) in a Master's thesis for the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, "professionalism will come from a formalized career path that incorporates continuing skills training, supervisor training, educational requirements for supervisory positions, and required certifications." (p. 3)

Operations personnel who work on shifts are the mainstay of the organization. They often become single focus specialists who identify career paths only within the operations division, cognizant of the clearly outlined time requirements for advancement. This paradigm is changing as well. Agencies that have formal career paths and career planning recognize that cross training is good for both the employees and the agency. Career path planning in these agencies will include assignments in staff positions as a part of the plan, often to the dismay of the employee. Clear rationale must be given so that they understand that "every young officer candidate must understand that to truly hone leadership and management skills, you must do some staff time." (Sargent, 2002, p. 3). These experiences yield a more versatile and experienced fire officer who understands and can pass on the mission of the organization to others. By cross training, an officer becomes fully aware of both the business end of the fire service (budgeting, planning, data collection, personnel management, interaction with other departments, etc...) and the operational component with which they are so familiar. Leadership borne out of this complete understanding will often be more balanced, yielding consistent, high quality results.

Career-path planning models

Career-path planning is an intentional process that lays out positions within the hierarchy of the organizations, time in grade requirements as well as education and certifications needed for promotional consideration. Once defined, a personalized

career path can be mapped out so that both the employee and the department share in the employee development process. This process is often left to the employee rather than proactively engaged in and partnered with the organization. New management practices are taking hold as agencies realize the dividends of participation in the preparing of their future leaders. Chase Sargent (2002) captures the essence of this as he observes, “the molding and developing of chief officers begin when they walk in the department as rookies and truly begin when they receive their first promotion to company officer.” (p. 1)

Planning models often have a component that is non-tangible as compared to identification of educational and certification levels. “Mentoring is a tool that can be utilized to bridge the gap between the knowledge that is required for the management activities, and those skills that must be developed in order to function at full potential in the leadership role.” (Gates, 2001, p. 8). Mentoring can be formal, pairing or grouping people for an expressed purpose, or informal, with people seeking out advice on their own.

Education and training requirements for promotion vary from state to state and agency to agency. In his Internet article on promotional processes, Walter Booth (1999) noted, “64 percent of the departments didn’t require their personnel to attend specific training courses before promotion.” He added, “43 percent of the departments [surveyed] had established minimum educational requirements for their promotional positions.” (p. 2). Economics often play a key role in the decision to include pre-promotion training for aspiring candidates versus targeted expenditures for newly placed incumbents. Collective bargaining agreements often spell out these provisions, particularly if premium pays are associated with certifications or degrees. A typical

model that includes degree requirements would require an Associate (A.A. or A.S.) for Lieutenant or Captain, Bachelor (B.A or B.S.) for Battalion or Assistant Chief, and either a Bachelor (B.A or B.S.) or Master (M.A. or M.S.) for the Chief of the department.

Criteria being used by fire departments in Washington State

Fire departments in Washington have the same standards for Firefighter, Pump Operator up through Fire Officer qualifications such as NFPA 1021 on which to build career path programs. These national standards were developed through a cooperative process to give a credentialing authority that has increased the professionalism of the fire service. According to fire service authors, Carter and Rausch (1999), "The intent of the committees was to develop clear and concise performance standards that could be used to determine whether a person possesses all the necessary skills for a fire service job." (p. 353).

In the urban population center of the Puget Sound, fire departments are utilizing degree programs in partnership and/or cooperation with local community colleges and universities to provide avenues for professional development and credentialing. One such program is the newly created Fire Officer Degree (FOD) program at Edmonds Community College in the City of Lynnwood. On the Internet site for the college it was noted, "the information, training and education gained from this program will enhance a student's chance to advance in the firefighting profession." (2004).

State certifications, National Fire Academy certificate programs and others are widely accepted as evidence of professional achievement within the State of Washington. Centralized, validated entry and promotional testing done by private vendors is utilized by many of the fire departments within the State to establish both

entry and promotional lists. This type of cooperative effort helps to standardize criteria, as well as cooperative hiring practices within the State.

Criteria for a career-path plan for the Lynnwood Fire Department

Career planning within the LFD is similar to most fire agencies. A rigorous hiring and probationary screening process begins the journey. At the point when a firefighter successfully completes probation, they are primarily responsible for preparation for upward mobility. Noting a lack of intentional planning on the part of the organization, and with the realization that “you must hire and retain quality people, and those people must be nurtured along a continuum of education commensurate with their current and anticipated roles in your organization,” (Johnson, 2004, p. 1), the Lynnwood Fire Department committed to an outside audit of its entire operations in 2003 to identify areas of emphasis. TriData Corporation completed its audit and forwarded an in-depth report to the department. One of the clear areas for emphasis was career-path planning. At the officer level, the report identified the need to “modify the requirements for officers to include formal officer training and education.” (TriData, 2003, p. 21).

In the LFD, as is generally the case in career departments around the country, “career advancement tends to be deliberate and cautious and is part of the tradition of the American fire service.” (Grant and Hoover, 1994, p. 33). Lack of turnover, and the subsequent lack of promotions, has left some very capable firefighters in the position of being ready, but not able to promote as the senior officers retire. The lack of a broad-based mentoring, training and developmental program for company officers to provide both line and staff assignments has been a critical area needing emphasis. The career ladder for the LFD is a model that is fairly standard in the industry; it is included in the results section. Firefighters are required to complete an acting book for each

rank/assignment prior to filling those assignments. This positive step, and the others that will follow, will begin to prepare the supervisors of the future.

Summary

Career-path planning is an undertaking that can be driven by the organization or the individual firefighter. Generally it involves an organization that clearly delineates career steps/ranks with identified criteria attached. These criteria, once solely experience and seniority, now incorporate educational and certification components as well. Once the organization lays out the pathway, an individual can begin to map out a course for individual development that will lead to successful accomplishment of whatever level of promotion is sought. Progressive fire departments will “yoke”, that is pair, an individual who has attained excellence in a particular area with an interested candidate in order to facilitate his/her development.

The professionalism of the fire service is increasing with the realization that in order to be an equal at the table, be it in the business community or local government, certification and advanced education are essential.

PROCEDURES

Action research methodologies were used to answer several questions relating to career-path planning criteria, what they are, how they are currently being used in other organizations, and how they might be used by LFD in the future. Questions one and two were answered by researching current source materials available on the Internet, through the LRC at the National Fire Academy and commonly available fire and non-fire related management resources.

Data Collection

The research data for questions three and four was collected utilizing two surveys. The first was directed at fire agencies in the State of Washington. The second was directed at the firefighters within the LFD. The procedures are described below.

Washington State Fire Department Survey

In regards to the (Appendix B), this instrument was sent to fire agencies in the State of Washington. The participants were selected from the 2004 member list of the Washington State Fire Chief's Association (WSFCA). This list is virtually inclusive of the total population of available participants (see limitations section.) A listing of participating organizations is attached as Appendix C.

The instrument, composed of three parts, was distributed in the following manner. The surveys were emailed in November 2004 and respondents were asked to respond within 10 days. Contact information was included should the respondent need clarification of any portion of the instrument. A cover letter was included to introduce the project and thank the participants. It is included as Appendix A. The first section of the survey again gave background on the instrument and the project, and collected demographic data from the respondents. The second section dealt with the main data and utilized the forced-choice methodology to obtain information regarding career-planning criteria. The third section provided space for any additional comments. Finally, space was provided at the end of the feedback instrument for participants to request copies of the results.

Lynnwood Fire Department Survey

In regards to the LFD Survey (Appendix F), this instrument was hand-delivered to all uniformed firefighters within the Lynnwood Fire Department. This is inclusive of the total

population of participants. The instrument, composed of three parts, was distributed in November 2004 and respondents were asked to return them within 5 days. A cover letter was included to introduce the project and thank the participants. It is included as Appendix E.

The first section of the survey again gave background on the instrument and the project. The second section dealt with the main survey data and utilized the forced-choice methodology to obtain information regarding career-planning criteria. The third section provided space for any additional comments.

Assumptions and limitations

The study contains several assumptions and limiting factors. First, the author assumed that the respondents answered all questions accurately and completely and were qualified and knowledgeable in regards to the subject matter requested. Second, the use of career-path planning within the fire service has not been extensively researched; consequently this limited the resources available for the study.

Additionally, participating survey participants were selected from a list of known participating agencies for the agency survey. The Washington State Fire Chief's Association does not break out volunteer agencies from combination or career, so the survey went to all member agencies. This list was the author's best attempt to allow all known organizations to participate, but it is reasonable to conclude that there might be organizations that were missed. Finally, the time constraints imposed by the Executive Fire Officer Program regarding the research assignment submittal timeline necessitated narrowing the scope and depth of the research.

Definitions

Forced-choice methodology – A data collection method that will yield consistent, quantifiable results by limiting the respondent's possible choices. Multiple-choice responses that do not include "no opinion" or "not applicable."

Combination department – A fire department that has some combination of paid and volunteer response staff.

RESULTS

Career-path planning and planning models

The planning process is not standardized on a national scale, however it is moving more in this direction with the introduction of several NFPA Standards, the Executive Fire Officer and Chief Fire Officer Designation programs, and educational core competency requirements. There is a fundamental shift from past processes that were more predicated on minimal education requirements, to one that is derived on the basis of a combination of traditional attributes coupled with increased educational requirements and certifications. These differences can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Comparison of Traditional vs. Current Model

	Traditional	Current
Age	Young 18+	Older 25+
Certification	Earn post-hire, if any	Possess on hire
Education	High School	Associate
Motivation	"Calling"	Career-choice
Planning	Very informal, employee driven	Formal, some shared responsibility
Promotion	Experience and seniority based	Performance/education component added

Career planning involves clearly identified career promotion criteria for each rank, including time in grade, time in service, professional certifications required and educational requirements clearly laid out. Secondly, whether individually or organizationally driven, the matching of available opportunities with individual preferences and desires. Finally, creating an action plan to achieve the criteria and successfully promote to the desired position. Mentoring is beginning to be a formal part

of the growth process along with job enrichment through short-term training opportunities in staff assignments.

In the Figure 2, Gary Johnson (2004, p. 2) identifies four stages of succession planning. Following, in Figure 3, is an example of an education and career path model from the fire services of Ontario, Canada. Finally, in Figure 4, authors T. Potts and A. Sykes (1993) compared the business hierarchy to its fire service equivalent. These examples are representative of the growing trend by fire departments to engage in the process of career-path planning.

Figure 2. Johnson Succession Planning Stages

Successful succession planning can be reduced to four components or stages:

1. Identify existing competencies relating to leadership needs as well as to the needs of your department and the community.
2. Evaluate members of your department and how the fit with the mission, vision and core values of your organization.
3. Implement coaching, mentoring recruitment and training requirements that are consistent with the department's operating mission, vision and values.
4. Develop a plan.

Figure 3. Ontario Fire Service Career Path

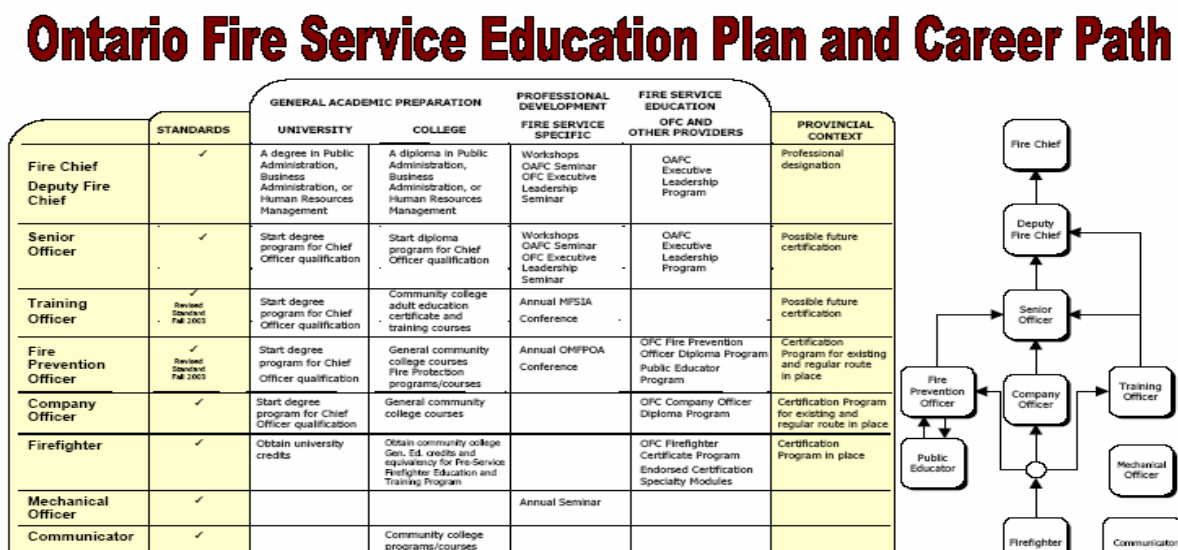


Figure 4. Potts and Sykes Business Model Comparison

1. Learning the grass-roots business (Firefighter/Engineer)
2. Managing operations (Fire Lieutenant/Fire Captain)
3. Managing line and staff at the corporate level (Assistant Fire Chief)
4. Senior level management – Executive VP or Chief Operations Officer (Deputy Fire Chief or Fire Chief)

Criteria being used by fire departments in Washington State

A total of 76 surveys out of 250 were returned, a return rate of 30%. Demographic data of responding departments is outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Washington State Survey Respondent Demographics

Type of Agency	Service Population		Career Firefighters		
Volunteer	5	<25,000	33	<25	38
Combination	42	25,001-49,999	19	25-50	13
Career	33	>50,000	24	51-99	10
				>100	15

The results below are presented with the numbers of departments having a career-path planning process contrasted with those departments that do not. This was done in order to present the results in a more readable format. The summary of results in total is included as Appendix D.

- Does your department have a career-path planning process? (Question 6)

23 – Yes 53 – No Total – 76

Of the 76 total responses, 53 (71%) stated that they do not currently have a formal career-path planning process in their department. None of the volunteer agencies had formal career-path planning processes, so any references in the rest of the study to departments having processes in place are to either combination or career departments. Of the 76 respondents, 23 (33%) stated that they currently have a formal

career-path planning process. At the point of hire, respondents indicated overwhelmingly (99%) that a high school diploma or GED was the minimum educational requirement.

- Do entry-level hiring requirements include any college/university work?

7 – Yes 68 – No Total – 76

Of the agencies that do require some college or university work, only (33%) require completion of a degree prior to hire.

- If yes, (to Question 1 above) is a degree required?

2 – Yes 5 – No Total – 7

Most agencies surveyed (80%) had some promotional mechanism and identifiable structure in place, with 35% of these agencies currently requiring a college degree for promotion to officer. 39 out of 76 or 52% require credentials appropriate for the position prior to promotion, and 52 out of 76 or 68% provide credentials/training only to the individuals after they are promoted.

- Does your fire department currently have a formal career ladder?

60 – Yes 16 – No Total – 76

- If yes (to Question 2 above), is a degree required for promotion to officer?

21 – Yes 39 – No Total – 60

- Are credentials required prior to promotion?

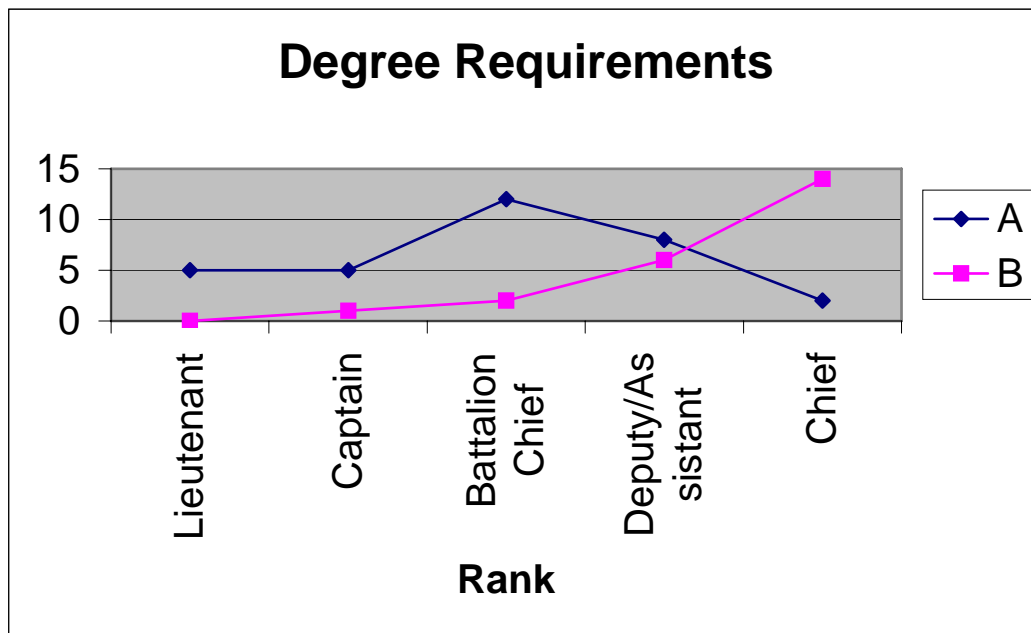
39 – Yes 37 – No Total – 76

- Are credentials/training provided after promotion?

52 – Yes 24 – No Total – 76

The degree requirements range from the AA/AS level only to BA/BS level. Figure 6 depicts the breakdown of degree type required for each position.

Figure 6. Degree Requirements for Fire Departments in Washington State



Note. A = A.S./A.A. Degree B = B.S./B.A. Degree

The final section of the survey deals with questions surrounding the career planning process. As stated at the beginning of the results section, 71% of respondents stated that they do not currently have a formal career-path planning process in their department. Out of the remaining 23 departments that do, the department in only 5 cases formally institutes the process. The remaining 17 are at the employees' request. Interestingly, 23 of the 76 departments represented in the survey offer formal mentoring initiatives to promotional candidates. Finally, 43 departments would consider assigning officers to staff assignments for training purposes, and 33 departments have programs in place that rotate line officers into day/staff positions for some period of time.

- If yes, is the career-path plan process instituted only at the employee request?

17 – Yes 5 – No Total – 76

- Does your fire department offer formal mentoring to aspiring officers?

23 – Yes 53 – No Total – 76

- Would your department be willing to assign individuals to staff assignments for training?

44 – Yes 32 – No Total – 76

- Does your department have a rotational assignment that includes day/staff positions?

33 – Yes 43 – No Total – 76

Criteria for a career-path plan for the Lynnwood Fire Department

The current career ladder is depicted in Figure 7. The rank is shown with the corresponding time in previous rank and educational requirements that must be satisfied to qualify for promotion.

Figure 7. Lynnwood Fire Department Career Ladder

Lynnwood Fire Department Career Ladder		
Rank	Time in Rank (Years) Requirement	Educational Requirement
Probationary Firefighter	NA	H.S. or GED
Firefighter/EMT	1	H.S. or GED
Firefighter/Paramedic	2	Paramedic Certificate
Fire Inspector	4	Fire Inspector
Lieutenant	4	Associate in related field
Captain	2	Bachelor in related field
Assistant Chief	2 (Lieutenant or Captain)	Bachelor in related field
Fire Chief	NA	Bachelor in related field

A total of 35 surveys out of 52 were returned, a return rate of 67%. The summary of results in total is included as Appendix G. All ranks and all personnel were given the survey in order to gain the broadest range of input. Several of the questions were the same or similar to the questions asked in the Washington State survey, coupled with questions that focused on areas of potential emphasis in the creation of a career-path planning process customized for the Lynnwood Fire Department.

At the point of hire, respondents favored (63%) a high school diploma or GED as the minimum educational requirement, with (22%) favoring some college work and the balance (15%) indicating that a college degree would be the baseline requirement for entry-level firefighters.

- Should entry-level hiring requirements include any college/university work?

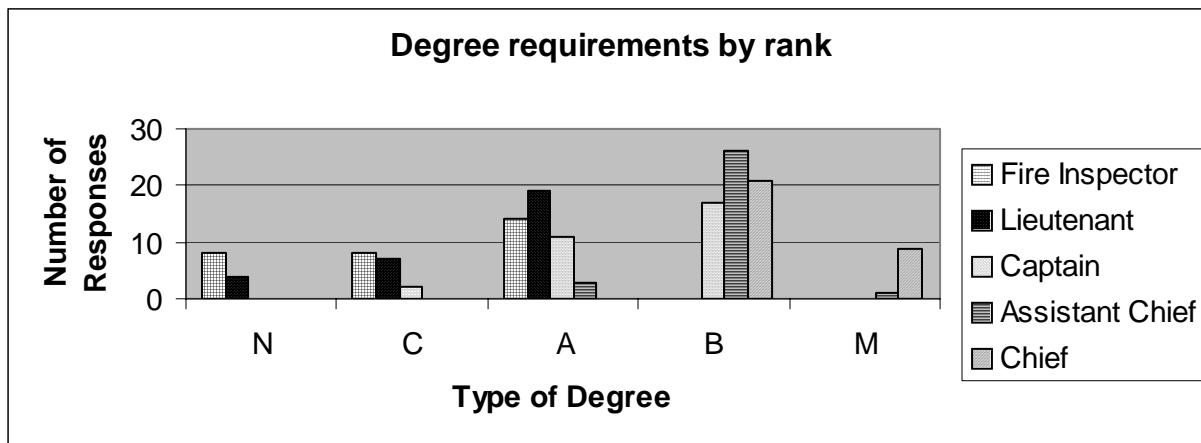
13 – Yes 22 – No Total – 35

- If yes, should a degree be required?

5 – Yes 8 – No Total – 13

Thirty out of thirty-five respondents (86%) believe that a degree should be required for promotion to the officer ranks. The degree requirements range from the AA/AS level to MA/MS level. The breakouts of degree types for each rank are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Degree Requirements for each Officer Rank.



Note. C = FOD Certificate A = A.S., A.A., B = B.S., B.A., M = M.S. or M.A. N = N/A

- Should a degree be required for promotion to officer?

30 – Yes 5 – No Total – 35

Thirty-three of thirty-five (94%) respondents overwhelmingly prefer the availability to obtain credentials appropriate for the position prior to promotion, and essentially all, 33 out of 35 or 94%, responded affirmatively to credentials/training being available to individuals after they are promoted.

- Should opportunities to obtain credentials be available prior to promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)

33 – Yes 2 – No Total – 35

- Should credentials/training be provided after promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)

33 – Yes 2 – No Total – 35

The next section of the survey deals with questions surrounding the career planning process. The responses regarding the career-path planning process in the department being instituted at the department level were divided. The respondents were evenly divided on the issue of career path planning, with half (49%) of respondents stating that they would like to see the process done at the organization and/or employee level, and (51%) only at the employees' request. 33 of the 35 respondents not only are in favor of the department offering formal mentoring initiatives to promotional candidates; 32 of 33 are willing to participate as a mentor.

- Should the career-path plan or planning process be instituted only at the employee request?

18 – Yes 17 – No Total – 35

- Should the fire department offer formal mentoring to aspiring candidates?

33 – Yes 2 – No Total – 35

- Would you be willing to be a mentor someone?

30 – Yes 3 – No Total – 35

Finally, 66% of respondents would have programs in place that rotate line personnel into day/staff positions for some period of time, and 74% believe the department would be interested in a sister city type of program in which the department would participate in short-term personnel exchanges with other agencies.

- Should the department have rotational assignments that include all positions in order to allow firefighters/officers the opportunity to gain short-term exposure and experience in varied positions?

23 – Yes 12 – No Total – 35

- Would you be interested in a partnership with other agencies to swap personnel for a day/shift for experience with other viewpoints?

26 – Yes 9 – No Total – 35

DISCUSSION

Career-path planning is a process that incorporates organizational structure, job competencies and employee skills as well as defining promotional requirements. Additionally, opportunities for self-development are identified and mutually supported. The intended result is a clearly delineated job profile with competencies identified and available training opportunities for interested employees. This is a critical undertaking in the professionalizing of the fire service, and one that is only slowly being heeded. The study validated the author's hypothesis that career-path planning process is not an integral part of the vast majority of fire agencies within the State of Washington. This will undoubtedly change in the coming years. As Dennis Bramblette (1996) identifies, "the challenge to any established leader should be to create an eventual line of succession of leaders for their organization." (p. 5).

At the point of hire, the current practice in the State is almost exclusively to require either a high school diploma or GED alone, or some college, but only 1% of the agencies require a degree. Roughly half of the fire agencies require appropriate

credentials prior to promotion, therefore, clearly outlined paths need to be developed to increase the qualified candidate pools for these promotions. In the LFD, 85% of the respondents believe that a college degree is a prerequisite to promotion to the officer ranks. The case is being made nationally in support of this movement toward credentialing and degree requirements, as cited by William Booth (1999) in the following,” while there are obvious costs associated with training personnel before promotion, demanding higher educational levels prior to promotion and using more sophisticated testing tools, the benefits to the organizations appear to greatly outweigh the costs.” (p. 3). This speaks well for the future, and lays the challenge down to the management teams in Lynnwood and around the State to create a career-path planning process.

The study identified that LFD members were split on the issue of whether the process should be instituted at the organizational level or driven by individual firefighters, but a process is desired in some form. This too is echoed by nationally recognized authors such as Chase Sargent (2002), who notes, “organizations...must create an environment and culture that provide the necessary training, mentoring and growth needed to develop tomorrow’s leaders.” (p.1).

Fire service agencies are modern business model driven, requiring proactive, qualified leaders at the helm. In their widely read book, *Fire Service Administration*, Drs. Grant and Hoover predicted this shift in 1994, stating, “the incorporation of a number of new services into the daily operations and responsibilities of many fire departments requires a more modern a professional management approach.” (p. 7). They go on to say, “many people have qualifications to do a job. Others have not only the qualifications but the motivations to use these qualifications to improve the operation

of a fire department. These are the individuals who should occupy senior officer positions.” (p. 152). In the Lynnwood Fire department, this was driven home in TriData (2003) audit report, reporting back that “current officers should be encouraged to act as mentors to those preparing for promotion or participating in the succession-planning program.” (p. 21). The department has taken this to heart, and is proactively developing an officer development course that encourages the learning process formally through the first four years of employment, and hopefully beyond as those who hold leadership positions embrace their responsibility to train up those who aspire to lead in the future.

National fire service authors continue to bolster those who lead the change effort to empower decision-making responsibility and managerial/leadership skill set development. The following examples are but a few. Gary Johnson (2004) writes, “we train the leaders of tomorrow by pushing decision-making down the chain of command.” (p. 2), and writers Carter and Rausch (1999), long-time fire management experts encourage us as well, “effective officers consider the career aspirations of their staff members.” (p. 364).

The author is encouraged by the results in that agencies are beginning to formalize planning efforts, and that in the Lynnwood Fire Department, there is interest in this process. This will strengthen each member of the organization individually, and the experience and knowledge gained in the process will equip the leaders to meet the challenges ahead in positive ways. In the end, each individual firefighter is faced with the decisions regarding his/her future, and the local fire agency can provide pivotal guidance, mentoring and support as they pursue their chosen career path.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that career-path planning is both necessary and sorely lacking. Fire departments are changing, with educational and certification requirements on par with other professions. The threats to communities continue to proliferate and expand the missions of the public safety agencies sworn to protect them. These myriad specialties require those who must master them to be intentional about the process. Organizations must assume the responsibility to join forces with their employees to ensure that the career-path planning process is formalized and intentional. While not all firefighters are interested in promotion, the system must provide direction and opportunity to those that are.

The problem stated at the outset was that there was not a formal career-path planning process in the LFD, and the purpose was to define and identify the process and its criteria in use within the State of Washington and then identify criteria for a program in the LFD. The results indicate clearly that a process is warranted, and the criteria must be moved from the pages of this study into a program with formal support in the Lynnwood Fire Department. The identified program criteria are attached as Appendix I. Mentoring must be provided at all levels of the organization, maximizing the tremendous talent that exists at each rank level to prepare people for the next step. New approaches such as the four-year officer development program that instill life long learning skills need to gain acceptance along with the rotation of personnel from line to staff assignments designed to give broad-based knowledge to all officers, whether interested in further promotion or just having a better understanding of the organization as a whole. Innovations such as a sister city type of personnel swap for a short period of time to gain alternative perspectives will need to be explored.

Concrete next steps for the Lynnwood Fire Department include study findings such as identifying existing competencies, evaluation of members of the department relating to study components and developing a plan to coach, mentor, train and equip leaders for the future. This must be a bipartisan effort that meets the needs of the management team, and embraces the value systems of the labor union and its members. Future readers may consider the formation of coalitions within their region to leverage talent and opportunities that may exist in one agency in order to provide depth to the programs they implement. Many agencies have unique situations that can provide insights not available in a firefighters' home department.

The opportunities are endless, and the future of the fire service is bright indeed. Professional firefighters will continue to gain acceptance as equals in the business and government arenas as they achieve milestones such as academic degrees, professional certifications and both line and staff experiences.

REFERENCES

- Blackmon, K. (2002). 'Sworn' versus 'Civilian' Career Development Paths in the Fire Service in Nevada. (pp. 3, 14). Unpublished master's thesis, University of Nevada at Las Vegas.
- Booth, W.S. (Aug. 1999). Raising the Bar for Promotions. *Fire Chief*. (p. 2). Retrieved October 31, 2004 from http://firechief.com/mag/firefighting_raising_bar_promotions/index.html
- Bramblette, D.M. (1996, May). Mentoring - Ultimate Leadership Role. *Responder*, 3. 5. (p. 5).
- Carter, H. R and Rausch, E. (1999). *Management in the Fire Service*. 3rd. Edition. (pp. 353, 364). Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association
- Department of Homeland Security, United States Fire Administration, National Fire Academy (2004) Executive Leadership, NFA_LCRR_SM. (Available from the National Fire Academy, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727-8998)
- Edmonds Community College. *Business Technology Center: Fire Officer Degree*. Retrieved November 4, 2004 from <http://fca.edcc.edu/>.
- Gates, T.A. (2001). Mentoring at the Executive Level in the Fire Service: A Criteria Study. *Executive Fire Officer Research Paper*. Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy.
- Grant, N. Ph.D., & Hoover, D. Ph.D. (1994). *Fire Service Administration*. (pp. 7, 33, 152). Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association.
- Johnson, G. (2004). Follow the Leader. *Fire Chief*. (pp. 1,2) Retrieved October 17, 2004 from http://firechief.com/management/firefighting_follow_leader/.
- Ontario Fire Service Education Plan and Career Path. Retrieved October 16, 2004 from http://www.ofm.gov.on.ca/english/Certification/pdf/Career%20Path_April%2003.pdf
- Potts, T. & Sykes, A. (1993). *Executive Talent: How to Identify and Develop the Best*. (p. 10). Homewood, IL: Business One Irwin
- "profession." *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. (2004). <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (18 Oct. 2004).
- Sargent, C. N. (2002). Chief Officers: Learn to Lead, not just Manage. *Fire Engineering*, (pp. 1,3) Retrieved October 17, 2004 from http://fepennet.com/Articles/Article_Display.cfm?Section=Archie&Subsection=Display&P=25&ARTICLE_ID=153169&KEYWORD=sargent

Tridata Corporation. (July 2003). Final Report: Fire Department Audit for the City of Lynnwood. (pp. v,21). Unpublished report.

APPENDIX A

Tod A. Gates
P.O. Box 5008
Lynnwood, WA. 98046
Tgates@ci.lynnwood.wa.us

November 4, 2004

Dear fellow fire professional:

I am asking for your help in completing a very short feedback instrument that is a vital part of my applied research project for the Executive Fire Officer program of the National Fire Academy. I am investigating career-path planning in the Washington fire service. I would very much appreciate you assisting me by filling it out and emailing it back to me within 10 days if possible. If you prefer to print and fax results, you may do so at (425) 771-7977. I would be happy to share the outcome of the research. If you would like to receive this information, please indicate at the bottom of the instrument and include your email address or fax number.

Sincerely,

Assistant Chief Tod A. Gates
Lynnwood Fire Department

APPENDIX B

Career Path Planning Survey

Lynnwood Fire Department

This survey is a vital part of my research project for the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete it and return it to me within 10 days at tgates@ci.lynnwood.wa.us or fax to (425) 771-7977. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Name of fire department (optional) _____

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate box to the left of the question.

Type of Fire Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Combination	<input type="checkbox"/> Career	
Population served	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 25,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 25,001-49,999	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater than 50,000	
No. of career FF	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-99	<input type="checkbox"/> 100+
Yes	No			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Do entry-level hiring requirements include any college/university work?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1a. If yes, is a degree required?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Does your fire department currently have a formal career ladder? (i.e. firefighter, engineer, lieutenant etc...?)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2a. If yes, is a degree required for promotion to officer?		
		3. If yes, enter the symbol on the appropriate line below.		
		A = A.S., A.A., B = B.S., B.A., M = M.S. or M.A. N = N/A		
		____ Lt. ____ Capt. ____ Batt. Chief ____ Asst./Deputy Chief ____ Chief		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Are credentials required prior to promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Are credentials/training provided after promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Does your fire department have a formal career-path plan or planning process?		
		6a. If yes, is the career-path plan or planning process instituted only at the employee request?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Does your fire department offer formal mentoring to aspiring officers?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Would your department be willing assign individuals to staff assignments for training?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Does your department have a rotational assignment that includes day/staff positions?		

Please put any additional comments here:

Thank you again for your assistance in this research. If you would like a copy of the final product, put email or fax number here.

APPENDIX C**WASHINGTON STATE SURVEY PARTICIPANT LIST**

ABERDEEN FD	COLLEGE PLACE FD	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #2	LEWIS CO FD #17
ADAMS CO FD #1	COLUMBIA CO FD #1	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #4	LEWIS CO FD #18
ADAMS CO FD #3	COLUMBIA CO FD #3	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #5	LEWIS CO FD #5
ADAMS CO FD #5	CONNELL FD	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #6	LINCOLN CO FD #1
ADAMS CO FD #7	COSMOPOLIS FD	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #7	LINCOLN CO FD #4
ANACORTES FD	COULEE CITY FD	HANFORD FD	LONG BEACH FD
ARLINGTON FD	COWLITZ 2 FIRE	ILWACO FD	LONGVIEW FD
ASOTIN CO FD #1	COWLITZ CO FD #1	ISLAND CO FD #1	LYNDEN FD
AUBURN FD	COWLITZ CO FD #3	ISLAND CO FD #2	LYNNWOOD FD
BELLEVUE FD	COWLITZ CO FD #4	ISLAND CO FD #3	MARYSVILLE FD
BELLINGHAM FD	COWLITZ CO FD #5	JEFFERSON CO FD #1	MASON CO FD #1
BENTON CO FD #1	DARRINGTON FD	JEFFERSON CO FD #2	MASON CO FD #11
BENTON CO FD #2	DAVENPORT FD	JEFFERSON CO FD #3	MASON CO FD #13
BENTON CO FD #4	DOUGLAS CO FD #1	JEFFERSON CO FD #4	MASON CO FD #16
BENTON CO FD #5	DOUGLAS CO FD #2	JEFFERSON CO FD #5	MASON CO FD #18
BENTON CO FD #6	DOUGLAS CO FD #4	JEFFERSON CO FD #6	MASON CO FD #3
BLACK DIAMOND FD	DOUGLAS CO FD #5	KENNEWICK FD	MASON CO FD #4
BOEING FD	DOUGLAS CO FD #7	KENT FD	MASON CO FD #5
BOTHELL FIRE & EMS	DUPONT FD	KING CO FD #16	MASON CO FD #6
BREMERTON FD	EASTSIDE F & R	KING CO FD #2	MASON CO FD #8
BRIDGEPORT FD	EATONVILLE FD	KING CO FD #20	MASON CO FD #9
BUCKLEY FD	EDMONDS FD	KING CO FD #25	MERCER ISLAND FD
BUCODA FD	ELLENSBURG FD	KING CO FD #26	METALINE FALLS FD
BURLINGTON FD	ENUMCLAW FD	KING CO FD #27	METALINE FD
CAMAS FD	EPHRATA FD	KING CO FD #40	MILTON FD
CASHMERE FD	EVERETT FD	KING CO FD #43	MONROE FD
CATHLAMET FD	FEDERAL WAY FD	KING CO FD #44	MONTESANO FD
CENTRALIA FD	FERRY CO FD #3	KING CO FD #45	MOSES LAKE FD
CHEHALIS FD	FERRY/OKANOGAN #14	KING CO FD #47	MOSSYROCK FD
CHELAN CO FD #1	FORT LEWIS FD	KIRKLAND FD	MOUNT VERNON FD
CHELAN CO FD #3	FRANKLIN CO FD #1	KITSAP CO FD #7	MOXEE FD
CHELAN CO FD #4	FRANKLIN CO FD #2	KITTITAS CO FD #1	MUKILTEO FD
CHELAN CO FD #5	FRANKLIN CO FD #3	KITTITAS CO FD #2	N. HIGHLINE FD
CHELAN CO FD #6	FRIDAY HARBOR FD	KITTITAS CO FD #3	N. KITSAP F & R
CHELAN CO FD #7	GOLDENDALE FD	KITTITAS CO FD #6	NESPELEM FD
CHELAN CO FD #8	GRAND COULEE FD	KITTITAS CO FD #7	OAK HARBOR FD
CHELAN CO FD #9	GRANDVIEW FD	KITTITAS CO FD #8	OCEAN SHORES FD
CHENEY FD	GRANT CO FD #10	KITTITAS FD	OKANOGAN CO FD #10
CLALLAM CO FD #2	GRANT CO FD #12	KLICKITAT CO FD #1	OKANOGAN CO FD #12
CLALLAM CO FD #3	GRANT CO FD #13	KLICKITAT CO FD #12	OKANOGAN CO FD #5
CLALLAM CO FD #4	GRANT CO FD #14	KLICKITAT CO FD #3	OKANOGAN CO FD #6
CLALLAM CO FD #5	GRANT CO FD #3	KLICKITAT CO FD #4	OKANOGAN FD
CLALLAM CO FD #6	GRANT CO FD #4	KLICKITAT CO FD #8	OLYMPIA FD
CLARK CO FD #10	GRANT CO FD #7	KLICKITAT CO FD #9	OMAK FD
CLARK CO FD #11	GRANT CO FD #8	LAKEWOOD FIRE DIST. 2	OROVILLE FD
CLARK CO FD #12	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #1	LEWIS CO FD #1	PACIFIC CO FD #1

CLARK CO FD #13	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #11	LEWIS CO FD #10	PACIFIC CO FD #2
CLARK CO FD #3	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #14	LEWIS CO FD #12	PACIFIC CO FD #4
CLARK CO FD #6	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #15	LEWIS CO FD #14	PACIFIC CO FD #5
CLARKSTON FD	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #16	LEWIS CO FD #15	PACIFIC FD
COLFAX FD	GRAYS HARBOR CO FD #17	LEWIS CO FD #16	PALOUSE FD
PASCO FD	SNOHOMISH CO FD #1	TUKWILA FD	SKAGIT CO FD #15
PATEROS FD	SNOHOMISH CO FD #14	TUMWATER FD	SKAGIT CO FD #16
PIERCE CO FD #12	SNOHOMISH CO FD #15	TWISP FD	SKAGIT CO FD #2
PIERCE CO FD #13	SNOHOMISH CO FD #16	UNION GAP FD	SKAGIT CO FD #3
PIERCE CO FD #16	SNOHOMISH CO FD #17	VANCOUVER FD	SKAGIT CO FD #4
PIERCE CO FD #17	SNOHOMISH CO FD #18	WAHIAKUM CO FD #1	SKAGIT CO FD #8
PIERCE CO FD #18	SNOHOMISH CO FD #19	WAHIAKUM CO FD #2	SKAGIT CO FD #9
PIERCE CO FD #21	SNOHOMISH CO FD #22	WAHIAKUM CO FD #4	SKAMANIA CO FD #1
PIERCE CO FD #23	SNOHOMISH CO FD #23	WALLA WALLA CO FD #3	SKAMANIA CO FD #5
PIERCE CO FD #25	SNOHOMISH CO FD #25	WALLA WALLA CO FD #4	SKYKOMISH FD
PIERCE CO FD #26	SNOHOMISH CO FD #26	WALLA WALLA CO FD #5	THURSTON CO FD #11
PIERCE CO FD #27	SNOHOMISH CO FD #27	WALLA WALLA CO FD #6	THURSTON CO FD #16
PIERCE CO FD #5	SNOHOMISH CO FD #28	WALLA WALLA CO FD #7	THURSTON CO FD #3
PIERCE CO FD #8	SNOHOMISH CO FD #5	WALLA WALLA CO FD #8	THURSTON CO FD #5
PORT ANGELES FD	SNOHOMISH CO FD #7	WALLA WALLA FD	THURSTON CO FD #6
POULSBO FD	SNOHOMISH CO FD #8	WAPATO FD	THURSTON CO FD #7
PROSSER FIRE DIST. 3	SNOHOMISH FD	WENATCHEE FD	THURSTON CO FD #8
PULLMAN FD	SPOKANE CO FD #1	WESTPORT FD	THURSTON CO FD #9
PUYALLUP FD	SPOKANE CO FD #10	WHATCOM CO FD #11	TIETON FD
RAINIER FD	SPOKANE CO FD #12	WHATCOM CO FD #14	TOLEDO FD
RAYMOND FD	SPOKANE CO FD #13	WHATCOM CO FD #16	YAKIMA CO FD #14
REDMOND FD	SPOKANE CO FD #2	WHATCOM CO FD #18	YAKIMA CO FD #3
RENTON FD	SPOKANE CO FD #3	WHATCOM CO FD #19	YAKIMA CO FD #5
RICHLAND FD	SPOKANE CO FD #4	WHATCOM CO FD #2	YAKIMA CO FD #6
RITZVILLE FD	SPOKANE CO FD #5	WHATCOM CO FD #4	YAKIMA FD
RIVERSIDE F & R	SPOKANE CO FD #8	WHATCOM CO FD #5	YELM FIRE DIST.
ROCKFORD FD	SPOKANE CO FD #9	WHATCOM CO FD #6	
ROSALIA FD	SPOKANE FD	WHATCOM CO FD #7	
RUSTON FD	SPOKANE INT'L FD	WHATCOM CO FD #8	
S CLE ELUM FD	SPRAGUE FD	WHITMAN CO FD #12	
S. PRAIRIE FD	STANWOOD FD	WHITMAN CO FD #13	
SAN JUAN CO FD #2	STEILACOOM FD	WHITMAN CO FD #5	
SAN JUAN CO FD #3	STEVENS CO FD #1	WHITMAN CO FD #6	*some agencies are combined
SAN JUAN CO FD #4	STEVENS CO FD #10	WHITMAN CO FD #7	
SEATTLE FD	STEVENS CO FD #12	WHITMAN CO FD #8	
SELAH FD	STEVENS CO FD #5	WILBUR FD	
SHELTON FD	SUMNER FD	WINTHROP FD	
SHORELINE FD	SUNNYSIDE FD	WOODINVILLE FD	
SKAGIT CO FD #11	TACOMA FD	WOODLAND FD	
SKAGIT CO FD #13	TEKOA FD	YAKIMA CO FD #1	
SKAGIT CO FD #14	THURSTON CO FD #1	YAKIMA CO FD #12	

APPENDIX D WASHINGTON STATE SURVEY RESULTS

Type of Fire Agency **5** Volunteer **42** Combination **33** Career
Population served **33** less than 25,000 **19** 25,001-49,999 **24** Greater than
 50,000
No. of career FF **38** less than 25 **13** 25-50 **10** 51-99 **15** 100 +

Yes **No**
7 **68** 1. Do entry-level hiring requirements include any college/university work?
2 **5** 1a. If yes, is a degree required?
60 **16** 2. Does your fire department currently have a formal career ladder? (i.e.
 firefighter, engineer, lieutenant etc...?
21 **39** 2a. If yes, is a degree required for promotion to officer?
 3. If yes, enter the symbol on the appropriate line below.

A = A.S., A.A., B = B.S., B.A., M = M.S. or M.A. N = N/A

Rank	A	B
Lieutenant	5	0
Captain	5	1
Battalion Chief	12	2
Deputy/Assistant	8	6
Chief	2	14

39 **37** 4. Are credentials required prior to promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)
52 **24** 5. Are credentials/training provided after promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)
23 **53** 6. Does your department have a formal career-path plan or planning process?
5 **17** 6a. If yes, is the career-path process instituted only at the employee request?
23 **53** 7. Does your fire department offer formal mentoring to aspiring officers?
44 **32** 8. Would your department be willing assign individuals to staff assignments for
 training?
33 **43** 9. Does your department have a rotational assignment that includes day/staff
 positions?

APPENDIX E

Tod A. Gates
P.O. Box 5008
Lynnwood, WA. 98046
Tgates@ci.lynnwood.wa.us

November 24, 2004

Dear fellow Lynnwood firefighter:

I am asking for your help in completing a very short feedback instrument that is a vital part of my applied research project for the Executive Fire Officer program of the National Fire Academy. I am investigating career-path planning in the Washington fire service. I would very much appreciate you assisting me by filling it out and returning it to me within 5 days if possible. I will share the outcome of the research with the entire department upon completion, and hope it will assist in the process of identifying appropriate career-path planning processes.

Sincerely,

Assistant Chief Tod Gates

APPENDIX F

Career Path Planning Survey

Lynnwood Fire Department

This survey is a vital part of my research project for the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete it and return it to me within 5 days. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Career-path planning is a process that incorporates organizational structure, job competencies and employee skills and defines promotional requirements. Additionally, opportunities for self-development are identified and mutually supported. The intended result is a clearly delineated job profile with competencies identified and available training opportunities for interested employees.

With the previous statements in mind, please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate box to the left of the question. Your participation will assist in the criteria development for a planning process in Lynnwood.

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Should entry-level hiring requirements include any college/university work? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1a. If yes, should a degree be required? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Should a degree be required for promotion to officer? |
| | | 3. If yes, enter the symbol on the appropriate lines below. |
| | | C = FOD Certificate A = A.S., A.A., B = B.S., B.A., M = M.S. or M.A. N = N/A |
| | | ____ Inspector ____ Lt. ____ Captain ____ Asst. Chief ____ Chief |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Should opportunities to obtain credentials be available prior to promotion?
(Inspector, EMT-P, etc...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Should credentials/training be provided after promotion? (Inspector, EMT-P, etc...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Should the career-path plan or planning process be instituted only at the employee request? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Should the fire department offer formal mentoring to aspiring candidates? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Would you be willing to be a mentor someone? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Should the department have rotational assignments that include all positions in order to allow firefighters/officers the opportunity to gain short-term exposure and experience in varied positions? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Would you be interested in a partnership with other agencies to swap personnel for a day/shift for experience with other viewpoints? |

Your feedback is important!!!

Please put any additional comments here

Thank you again for your assistance.

APPENDIX G**LYNNWOOD SURVEY PARTICIPANT LIST**
(Current as of 12/04)

Name
Aceto, J.
Baker, K.
Blachly, J
Cain, B.
Conderman, J.
Douglas, D.
DiBenedetto, S.
Forbes, I.
Forbes, K.
Gastkill, J.
Grantier, D.
Hadland, L.
Hall, G.
Hammon, L.
Herrmann, W.J.
Hudson, M.
Jacobson, B.
Jeske, R.
Johnston, M.
Kelly, D.
MacDonald, A.
Macke, G.
Martin, D.
Matthews, D.
Maxwell, K.
McNulty, L.

Name
Miller, K.
Ogurkow, D
Olson, G.
Pfeil, M.
Pons, P.
Portmann, R.
Protzeller, T.
Puetz, J.
Quintel, J.
Russell, S.
Schulz, D.
Schweitzer, V.
Sieloff, G.
Sessions, K.
Shaw, K
Skelton, S.
Stevens, V.
Strachan, D.
Turner, J.
Vanderpoel, M.
Webster, G.
Whitmire, C.
Williams, A.
Williams, S.
Youngman, B.

APPENDIX H**Lynnwood Fire Department Survey Results****Yes** **No****13** **22** 1. Should entry-level hiring requirements include any college/university work?**5** **8** 1a. If yes, should a degree be required?**30** **5** 2. Should a degree be required for promotion to officer?

3. If yes, enter the symbol on the appropriate lines below.

C = FOD Certificate A =A.S., A.A., B = B.S., B.A. M = M.S. or M.A. N = N/A

Rank	N	C	A	B	M
Fire Inspector	8	8	14	0	0
Lieutenant	4	7	19	0	0
Captain	0	2	11	17	0
Assistant Chief	0	0	3	26	1
Chief	0	0	0	21	9

33 **2** 4. Should opportunities to obtain credentials be available prior to promotion?
(Inspector, EMT-P, etc...)**33** **2** 5. Should credentials/training be provided after promotion?**18** **17** 6. Should the career-path plan or planning process be instituted only at the employee request?**33** **2** 7. Should the fire department offer formal mentoring to aspiring candidates?**30** **3** 8. Would you be willing to be a mentor someone?**23** **12** 9. Should the department have rotational assignments that include all positions in order to allow firefighters/officers the opportunity to gain short-term exposure and experience in varied positions?**26** **9** 10. Would you be interested in a partnership with other agencies to swap personnel for a day/shift for experience with other viewpoints?

APPENDIX I

LYNNWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT CRITERIA LIST

Study results indicate clearly that the department should have a formal career-path planning process. A cooperative effort will be initiated by the Labor-Management committee to identify the final criteria. Based on initial survey results, they would include:

1. An appropriate college degree will continue to be required for promotion to various officer ranks.
2. Some opportunities to obtain credentials prior to promotion should be available.
3. Required credentials/training not possessed by successful candidate should be provided after promotion.
4. The committee will need to decide whether the career-path planning process institution would be organizationally driven or at the employee request.
5. A formal mentoring process would be offered to aspiring candidates that capitalize on the experience and talents of the members of the Lynnwood Fire Department at all levels.
6. Rotational assignments that include all positions in order to allow firefighters and officers the opportunity to gain short-term exposure and experience in varied positions should be included.
7. Formation of partnerships with other local fire departments to swap personnel for a day/shift for experience with other viewpoints should be explored.